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ADDRESS OF WELCOME

By DR. GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

So many welcomes await you that I hardly know how to compass them in a few words and my single voice. You are the trustees of all knowledge; but naturally I welcome you, especially, as the guardians of literature. It is an old saying that what American literature lacks chiefly in the way of favorable conditions, is a literary capital, such as other great nations have, to concentrate opinion, to set up standards, to establish reputations, in a word to stabilize, as we now say, the literary movement. Lately Mr. Galsworthy has told us the same thing. He suggests that we should make Washington—a nice cosmopolitan city, fit for the purpose—the Mecca of our minds. But we do not take naturally to autocracies of any sort. Ours is a movable seat of literary inspiration, a tabernacle, as it were. Long ago it was set up here in New England; I heard of it in my middle years in Indiana; and lately it has shown signs of its presence in California. "Westward the course of empire takes its way." All this is in harmony with our traditions. The truth is, the intellectual center of anything American is a convention, such as this great assembly, gathered from all quarters of the land, for the communication of ideas and the intellectual ferment, and sometimes stress, that follows.

Such assemblies, when they have become representative and nation-wide, like to come back to the places where were their humble beginnings, the first sowing of the seed that came to fill so vast a field. "The origins of American Librarianship" says your President "were rooted in New England." Certainly New England was fortunate in the early growth of libraries; and no village is now thought to be completely American, in its civil structure, unless it has added to the old trio of Democracy—the church, the town meeting and the school house—a fourth member, the public library. Sometimes

our early fortune in libraries came in a strange way.

This was curiously the case with the neighboring Salem Athenaeum. You may not all know the story, which is a local anecdote. The good ship *Pilgrim*, a privateer of the Revolution, captured one day on the high seas, after a three hours' fight, gallant on both sides, the British ship, *Mars*, and brought into the harbor of Beverly yonder, with other spoils of war, the private scientific library of a gentleman of Dublin. A small group of public spirited men—they were mostly clergymen of the neighborhood, and afterwards offered an indemnity to the owner—bought it; and I like to remember that it was stored and used in a house within a stone's throw of where I was born, and in a room where I used to play as a child. That library was one of the foundation stones of the Salem Athenaeum, where Bowditch first learned the language of science from those very books, and Hawthorne fed his youthful genius in the solitude of its less heavily weighted shelves. I cite the incident for its local color, but also as a pleasing illustration of how the fortune of war may advance the works of peace, as you learned through your own army experience. How much greater now, for example, is your grasp of what is fitly called Mass-Education, the science of distributing ideas, useful information, ideals of living, economically and effectively, to large bodies of men!

But notwithstanding the great tasks you have accomplished and propose, I praise the life of the librarian rather for its private than its public side, in the opportunity it affords for direct touch with the reader. The power of any organization lies in the place where the spirit abides; and in libraries the place where the spirit abides is the book. The power of the organization, however great, does its best work in bringing to bear the power of the

book; and by contrast, the book is so slight a thing. But books—the silent volleys falling incessantly on the forts of folly—are the batteries of civilization. Like atomic storms that change the constitution of matter, they change the constitution of states. The victories of literature are won in the minds of individuals, and chiefly in those of the young. Dr. Holmes said that the best thing for a lad of promise was to be turned loose in a library. I had that experience, I was once a young library page and being a favored child, I had a private key; and well I remember the quiet afternoons in the dark and lonely library where sitting on the stepladders, used for the shelves, I had my first adventures in the unknown world of books, and found *Childe Harold*, and Carlyle's *Essays* and Irving's *Columbus* and the hundred other bits of treasure-trove. It is thus one learns to love the feel of books, and tastes the true air of a library, and comes to have that exalted and "almost sacred feeling" for letters, "which" Emerson says "the years of boyhood alone can give." The happiest memory of a librarian must be that he has put a reader in the way of opening horizons that open lifelong. I know your lives are full of seemingly useless acts of kindness; but a name, a title, helped by the magic of the friendly word, scarcely noticed at the time, may be to the youth a blazing signpost to the joys and treasures of the mind. I recall my first visit to the Harvard Library. I was a high-school boy of fourteen, and I was troubled by the inadequacy of my knowledge about Cicero; so I went up to Cambridge, alone—in those days a strange and far journey for me—and found Gore Hall. It was closed by an immense portal, which I supposed was the door. I have never seen that door open, except once long afterwards on a Commencement Day; but some friendly student noticed my puny efforts, and directed me to the humble wicket at the side, where I entered and boldly announced my errand. I was taken to Dr. Sibley, that good old man, to whom

I had previously written a boyish note; and he, gravely remarking that older heads than mine had been puzzled by Cicero's politics, gave me a table and himself brought me a little heap of books; and there I had my first hours of what is now proudly known as research work.

That was one of those useless acts of kindness that I mean, characteristic of library life. I have myself observed in many places, east and west, as a teacher, how frequently the seed of the friendly word of the librarian has fallen on good ground, as students have told me how they became interested in the intellectual life and were set in the path that is the climbing highway of man's spirit; and, remembering these things, I am inclined to believe that the private life of a librarian is as useful to the state as a public career.

The author is an example of the private life in its most secluded form. But after the mortal author is gone, he sometimes becomes socialized, as it were, and approachable in men's affections and regard. The places he has lived gather light from his vanished form; the scenes he has touched with his imagination, the desires and thoughts of the heart, wear the abiding radiance of his spirit, and men like to make pilgrimages to what were once his haunts; whole districts take his name, Wordsworth's country, Tennyson's country. For all of us, such a literary halo and afterlight is a part of the charm of foreign lands. In our country, the Hudson still repeats the name of Irving, and the ragged mountains of Virginia echo of Poe; and New England, too, wears this new light which literature brings. I am sure many of you feel it now. I imagine that if Dr. Holmes were here, he would draw a poem from his pocket for the auspicious occasion; but in our later day you will better hear the silent voices of the past in the sights and sounds about you—the bells of Lynn, for example, whose music Longfellow rang in his verse; and not far off is Aldrich's Lynn Terrace, where he dreamed over again his Spanish

voyages and lands beyond the blue. Northward are the Marblehead beaches and headlands where Hawthorne drank the sunshine of long summer days, and the Salem streets he walked by night, brooding his New England tales; and if you are adventurous, farther away you may sight the reef of Norman's Woe, the most immortalized name of our local geography; or by the Beverly shore, where the road dips down nearest the beach, you may see the cottage where Lowell, looking off over the luminous waves, seemed to have a second sight of Sorrento and the

wide Neapolitan bay. Such literary memories give a noble background of the mind to the quiet beauty of our shore. Our Lowell did not have the tang of salt water in his verse. His was an inland nature; and you must go past the Elmwood chimneys, and the Charles River meadows to catch the echo of that large and liberal soul, that happy nature, "sloping to the southern side"; and beyond are Walden Pond, and Emerson, and Whittier. These poets are your hosts, hosts of your minds; and there is your true welcome.

GREETING TO THE ASSOCIATION

BY SARAH LOUISE ARNOLD, *Dean Emerita, Simmon College, Boston, Massachusetts*

It gives me deep pleasure to have the honor and privilege of extending to you the welcome of old Massachusetts. We rejoice that you have come to us and have high hopes that your stay may be filled with satisfying conferences, with wholesome counsel, with the friendly give and take of abundant experience, with the refreshment of sympathetic understanding, and with rest in the unfailing benediction of the great sea.

It is our proud boast that every hamlet, however remote, has its library, while all the cities and towns in council chamber or in town meeting, provide books for the people in the annual dispensation of essential goods.

And this is as it should be, for the library is essential to America's chief business, which is the rearing, training, and developing of the citizens of our nation. First and foremost, we pledge ourselves, one and all, to preserve and maintain the cherished ideals of America and to make possible still higher ideals. And because we knew from the beginning, as the little red schoolhouse abundantly testified, that ideals cannot be maintained without education, it has come to pass in America, that whatever else may halt, we must cherish the schools of the people. And the library is a great school

We make a mistake when we confuse schooling and education. Give as generously as we may, and extend as far as we can all the physical limits of the schools, and all the time allotted to schooling, we still have compassed but a small part of the great business of life—education. This earth of ours is an experiment station where one soul after another strives to spell out the meaning of the universe in the laboratory which Nature has provided. Our Mother Earth is generous to every son and daughter and offers with sublime patience and with unbounded generosity every possible demonstration of the unfailing laws of Nature. Every new mind attacks the problems, which it faces as if none other has ever explored. "See!" cried a five-year-old boy, playing by the water side; "I have found out that some things sink and some things swim!" First discoverer, he! And so it must always be with youth. But the time comes, if education goes on wisely, when the child turns to those about him to ask what *they* have discovered, and then, thank Heaven, appears the Book, with its record of the striving of humanity, and endless yearning to understand.

And the library is custodian of the Book—sacred task! For when the soul *wants to know* and eagerly asks what others